

The Power of Prayer.

In this progressive age of Christianity, when the church seems aroused to greater activity, and is putting forth more earnest endeavors to break the power of Satan's kingdom and establish the kingdom of Christ upon the earth, it is necessary that the best means be used to accomplish this end. The object of the church is to convince men of sin, point them to the cross of Christ for pardon, and build them up in faith. To do this there must be unity of effort and strong faith in God. There may be colleges and seminaries in which young men may prepare themselves for the work of the church, there may be large and costly church houses, the members may be numbered by thousands, there may be an educated and accomplished ministry, and yet the church may not be successful in winning souls to Christ. There seems to be a lack of power.

Is there not a lack of strong, unshaken faith in the power of prayer? Believing prayer takes hold of the Almighty's strength. It is the key which opens the windows of heaven and moves the arm that moves, governs, and controls the universe. We might enter a machine-shop and see many different kinds of machines skillfully made, carefully adjusted, and fastened in their proper places. We see the workmen in their respective positions. But the machinery does not move, and the work does not go forward. But attach the power of the engine to these motionless wheels, and how suddenly every part seems to spring into action. So it is with the vast machinery of the church. Everything seems to be in proper order, men are standing at their respective places, and all we need is more power. The prayer of faith is the means by which we lay hold of this power.

What a mighty power there is in prayer when it springs forth from a believing heart! Then it is that we see the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man availing much. And how many examples we have in proof of this statement. The prophet Elijah entered boldly into the presence of the wicked king Ahab and said, "As the Lord God liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word." Now, we are assured that this closing up of the heavens and the opening of them again was in answer to prayer. Again when he had that great test with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, he lifted up his voice in earnest prayer, and fire came down from heaven and burned up all as though it had been chaff in a furnace. Is it possible that man could have such power with God? Yes, it is possible and true. It was the prayer of faith that brought the angel Gabriel from heaven with a message to Daniel. It was in answer to prayer that the Holy Ghost fell upon the apostles. The prayers of that little band in John Mark's cottage were answered in the deliverance of Peter from prison. How often we hear persons saying their prayers as though they were repeating a declamation. Perhaps they have committed the most of it from a prayer book, or use the same prayer day after day without any alteration or advancement.

Ah, how different this saying of prayers from earnest wrestling with God. We should be willing to make sacrifices to have special seasons of prayer. The man of the world will spend night after night in the vain pursuit of pleasure and in the service of sin. Do we give one hour of the quiet night to be alone with God? In his great trouble Luther would spend hours in agonizing prayer to God. Listen to the midnight prayer of John Knox. Well might Mary Queen of Scots say she feared the prayers of this man more than all the armies of Queen Elizabeth. Let us take Christ as our example. He went up into a mountain and spent the whole night in prayer. Oh, if we could have hidden behind some gray rock and heard that prayer we never would offer a prayerless prayer again. Then if we would see souls won for Christ, if we would see the work prosper, if we would have a deep, rich Christian experience in our own hearts, we must have explicit faith in God, get the spirit of faith in prayer, and nothing will be impossible to us. Obstacles of all kinds will be removed or turned into helps, rocks will be rent, and red seas part at our bidding, and heaven's wonderful treasures will be at our command.—REV. W. S. SAGE in *Telescope*.

Be deaf to the quarrelsome, blind to the scorner, and dumb to those who are mischievously inquisitive.

To whom you betray your secret you betray your all.

Procrastination is fatal to all plans for reformation. Whoever intends to repent and seek the Lord to-morrow, or next week, is in the broad road that leads to perdition.